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SUBJECT: DRC ELECTIONS: ELECTORAL COMMISSION POSTPONES
VOTING FOR SENATORS, GOVERNORS

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¶1. (U) The DRC's Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) has postponed the elections for the country's national senators, governors and vice governors. According to CEI officials, the elections were pushed back because of difficulties in installing the newly-elected provincial assemblies. Provincial representatives will now select senators and governors at the end of January once the permanent leadership structures of the eleven assemblies are installed January 15.

¶2. (U) Senate elections previously scheduled for January 7 are slated for January 19. Provincial deputies will elect 108 national senators, with eight representing Kinshasa and four from each of the other 25 provinces. A total of 1,124 candidates are running for the Senate, and results will be published January 20. The Senate is expected to convene February 3.

¶3. (U) Elections for governors and vice governors will take place January 27. Run-off elections, if no candidate receives a majority in the first round, are set for January 30. Gubernatorial elections had been previously scheduled for January 16. A total of eleven governors and eleven vice governors -- one for each of the current provinces -- will be elected from among 152 candidates for both offices. Governors and vice governors run on the same ticket and are also chosen by the provincial assemblies. The CEI said results from these elections will be announced February 7.

¶4. (SBU) The delay in the electoral calendar is partly the result of logistical problems tied to the installation of the provincial assemblies, which were elected October 30. Provisional results from these elections were not announced until early December, leaving the new deputies less than a month to convene, begin drafting internal regulations, and prepare for the elections of senators and governors. CEI officials said that in many provinces, including Eastern Kasai, Orientale and Katanga, the assemblies did not have buildings where they could meet. Many offices which were being used, officials said, often had no electricity and were in various states of disrepair.

¶5. (SBU) Another factor which led to delays in standing up the provincial assemblies was the selection of traditional chiefs ("chefs coutumiers") as members of the provincial assemblies. According to the DRC's electoral law, each provincial assembly was to select a certain number of these chiefs to ensure local representation of traditional Congolese societies. The selection process for the chiefs was neither well-planned nor well-publicized by the CEI, causing confusion and dissent among the provincial deputies and the

chiefs themselves. Without including the chiefs in their ranks, the assemblies could not legally proceed with elections for senators and governors. CEI spokesman Dieudonne Mirimo told us as of January 8 all the "chefs coutumiers" have now been selected nationwide.

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